



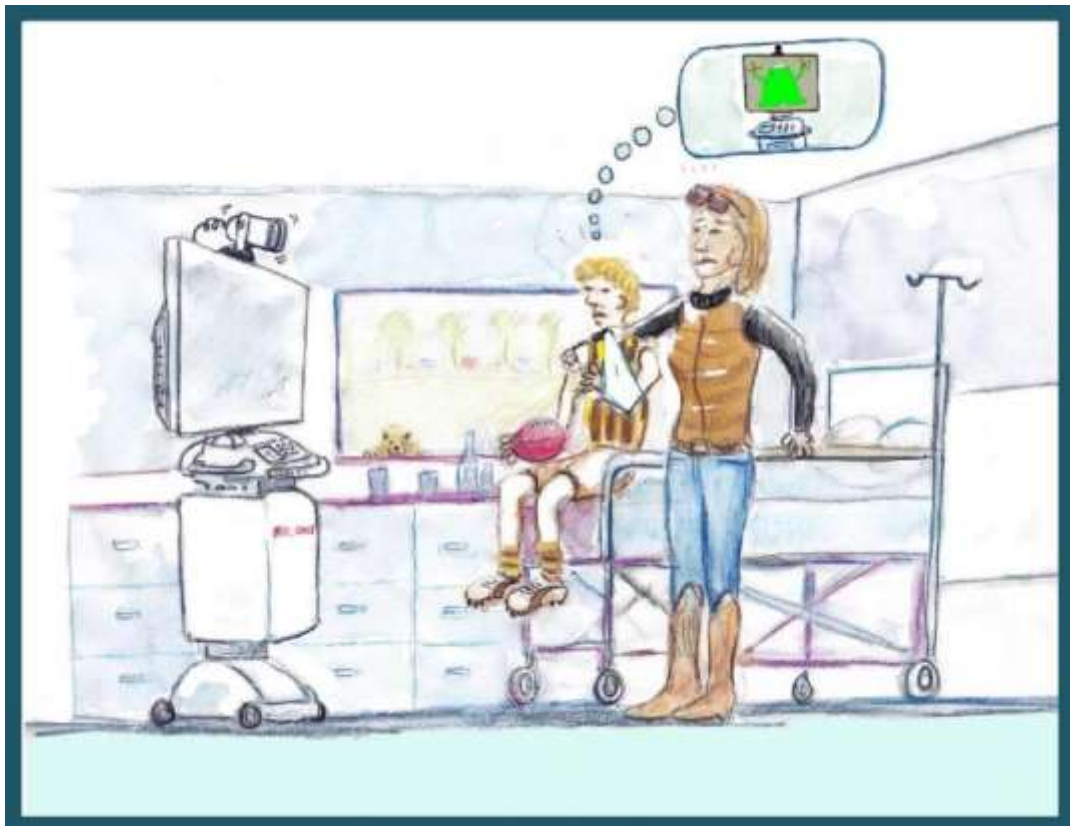
**GIPPSLAND SOUTHERN**  
Health Service

# Gippsland Southern Health Service

## Urgent Care Centre

### TELEHEALTH

## Patient Information Booklet



# What is Telehealth?

**Telehealth is the delivery of health care at a distance using information and communications technology.**

Emergency Department (ED) Telehealth is an innovative **new after-hours medical service** that uses videoconferencing (VC), and is now available at Urgent Care Centre's (UCCs) in the Gippsland region.

After-hours medical care is provided by ED doctors from La Trobe Regional Hospital (LRH) Traralgon to patients in UCCs after hours (between the hours of 9.00pm and 7.00am for Triage Categories 4 & 5. If required a doctor from La Trobe Regional Health Service in Traralgon, will see the UCC patient by video link using a prac cart ("prac" being short for "practitioner") or VC unit.



# Why Telehealth?

## Greater access to medical care after hours:

This initiative is to support the Urgent Care Centre after hours (between the hours of 9.00pm and 7.00am for Triage Categories 4 & 5, who are unable to be treated by a Registered Nurse Division 1 and need medical review prior to discharge, a nurse will refer the patient to LRH's ED for a Telehealth consultation with a doctor. Patient details are faxed to LRH by the nurse who then contacts the ED by telephone to arrange a video conference (VC) link. Telehealth enables the patient at a remote site to have a consultation with an ED doctor at LRH by video.



*ED Telehealth simply substitutes a face-to-face consultation with a GP for a video-consultation with an ED doctor*

Telehealth is used in many forms around the world to overcome the barrier of distance to health care. It has been used in the more remote areas of Australia for some time, and is now making its way into mainstream health services across the country.

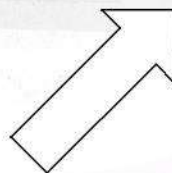
***Telehealth replaces travel!***

# How It Works

When a Telehealth referral is made to LRH, the patient becomes a 'virtual patient' of LRHs ED....so is 'virtually transferred' to LRH ED's waiting room, and will be seen by an ED doctor in due course.

Waiting time varies according to:

- how urgently the patient needs to be seen, and
- number of patients waiting in the queue at LRH ED (and urgency of their conditions).



# How long does it take to be seen?

**Average waiting times will vary! This is dependent on the priority of cases waiting, but you will be given an idea of the timeframe that you will be seen in once the referral has been made to the LRH ED.**

A shorter time .....



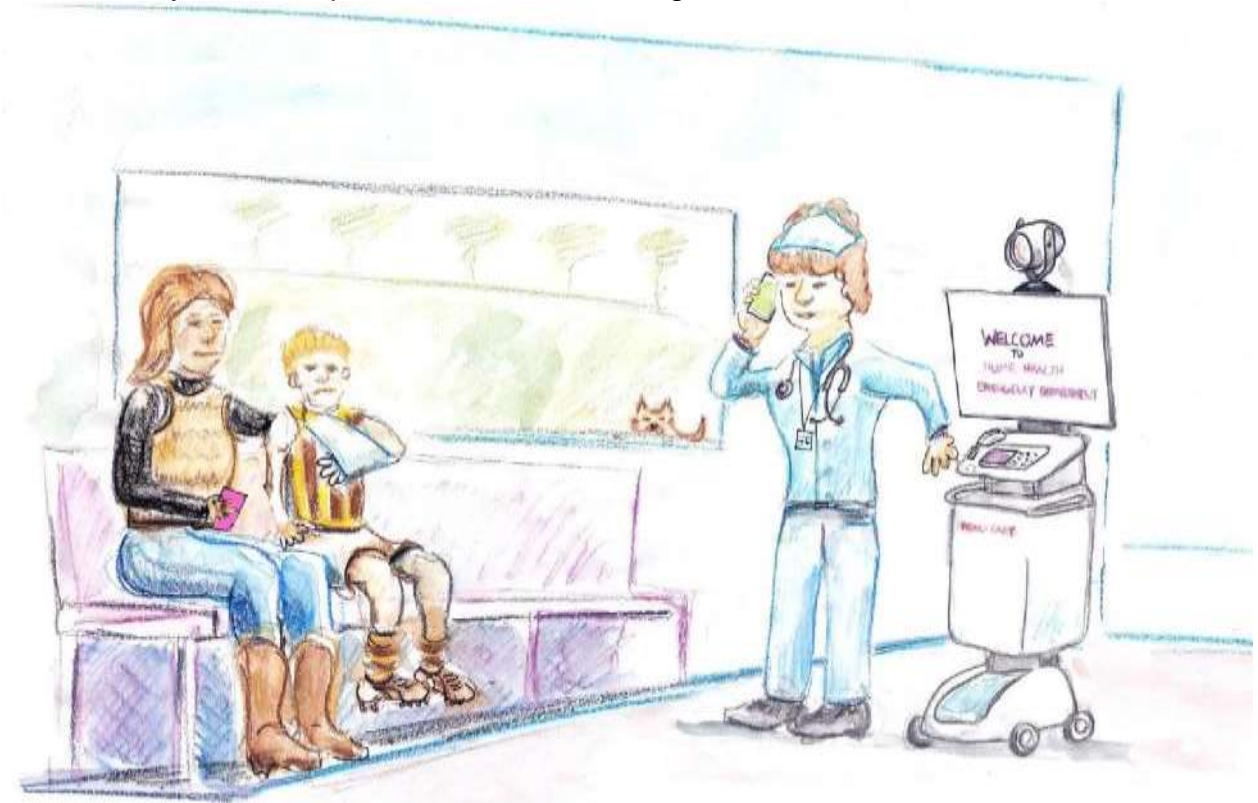
A longer time .....but much better than driving to LRH ED to start waiting again.



# During the Consultation

The LRH ED doctor calls by telephone to check all is ready to go.

A nurse stays with the patient at all times during the video consultation.



The patient and ED doctor will be able to see and talk to each other using video conferencing via the VC unit camera and screen.

A Telehealth consultation is just as **private and confidential** as a normal face-to-face ED consult – and is NOT video recorded.

The VC unit (at LRH) is in an office area, so passers-by cannot see it.

The LRH ED doctor will be wearing a headset with a microphone. This maintains confidentiality during the consultation, and reduces any background noise in the LRH ED from being heard at your end.

At a later date, the patient will be **invited to participate in a short survey** conducted by Monash University. Their **feedback is critical** for the success of this service, it is needed to ensure:

- patients feel comfortable with ED Telehealth;
- patients consider ED Telehealth a high quality medical service;
- further funding and support for the service into the future.

# After the Consultation

Most patients go home after the video consultation, unless they need admission to a regional hospital or an ambulance transfer elsewhere.

Depending on their situation, patients may or may not need a follow up appointment with their GP – they will be instructed at the time of consultation.

All patient records from the Telehealth consultation become part of patient's medical history - at their local hospital and at LRH.



## Acknowledgements



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Cartoon images by Outback Antics